

# **CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA-**

## **9 UPDATES AUGUST 2011**

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**Financial Times: Western comments on China-Africa ties "largely misplaced"**

**Source: Xinhua**

**11:43, August 28, 2010**

Some western commentators' critical comments concerning China's burgeoning relationship with Africa are "largely misplaced," says a Financial Times editorial.

Wednesday's editorial - "China's new scramble for Africa" - said Western-led development strategies, however well meaning, did not break the cycle of under-development in Africa. Chinese investments, made for sound business reasons and boosting employment and growth, offer new hope and an alternative way forward, the editorial said.

The infrastructure that the Chinese are building will also have positive spin-off effects for industries outside of natural resources. Chinese traders have brought cheap consumer goods to Africa. And, as labor costs rise at home, Chinese manufacturers may look at Africa with new interest, as a base for production, the editorial said.

To the Western countries that uphold the spirit of competition, there's no reason to complain about China's strengthening its relationship with Africa, the editorial said.

One reason that African governments often love doing business with the Chinese is that they are much less likely to condition their investments on improvements in government, and the pragmatic attitude of the Chinese government should be appreciated, the editorial said.

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**South China Morning Post**

**Fewer crimes may get death penalty**

**Legislature considers removing capital punishment for up to a fifth of offences**

Ng Tze-wei

Aug 24, 2010

The list of crimes punishable by the death penalty on the mainland will be cut by a fifth if amendments to the criminal code gain approval from the legislature.

It is the first time since 1979 that the government has made such a proposal. The mainland's use of the death sentence for a wide range of offences has subjected Beijing to severe criticism from the international community.

In a report published yesterday, Xinhua said: "The control of the use of the death penalty is an international trend."

The amendments would remove 13 of the 68 offences subject to the death sentence - mainly non-violent crimes where the death penalty has been rarely or never invoked.

Such offences include smuggling, the forgery of value-added tax receipts, and stealing from ancient graves and fossil sites.

Crimes such as faking VAT receipts were considered serious three decades ago, but are now common offences on the mainland.

The country's highest lawmaking body, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, is meeting this week to discuss new legislation and amendments. The proposed eighth amendment to the criminal code, passed in 1979, and the abolition of the death penalty for 13 crimes has attracted the most attention.

Some of the most common criticisms of the mainland's use of the death penalty focus on the large numbers of crimes punishable by death, the many executions and the lack of transparency in the whole death-penalty system.

The number of executions carried out each year is a state secret, but international human rights organisations such as the California-based Dui Hua Foundation estimate the figure to be about 5,000.

Amnesty International says it surpasses the number of executions carried out in the rest of the world each year.

Joshua Rosenzweig, senior manager of research at Dui Hua, welcomed the proposed amendment but said it was an "incremental step" and more a "symbolic move" than a measure that would actually lower the number of executions.

"Death penalties have rarely been invoked for these crimes," Rosenzweig said. "We hope that the government could respond more on the two points of lack of transparency and the frequent use of death penalties."

Official figures show the number of death penalties has been reduced by at least 15 per cent since a Supreme People's Court rule introduced in 2007 required all death sentences to be subject to a final review by the top court. Rosenzweig said, however, that the operation of the review procedure was opaque.

An ardent advocate of the abolition of the death penalty for non-violent crimes, Professor Liu Renwen from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said he thought the move was a big step forward.

But he was hoping that the death penalty could be abolished for all non-violent crimes - more than half of the remaining 55.

"But I think this is not an easy step given that the majority of the population still oppose the abolition of the death penalty," Liu said, putting support for the death sentence at more than 80 per cent.

The central government says it will eventually abolish the death sentence altogether, but the time is not yet right.

However, one paragraph in the Xinhua report surprised both Rosenzweig and Liu, and gave hope to the latter that more positive news might be in the pipeline.

Xinhua said that more than 90 countries had completely scrapped death penalties, and more than 40 had not used the punishment for more than 10 years.

"It appears that the crime rate did not soar in countries that abolished the death penalty," the report concluded, with Liu noting that it was a rare acknowledgement by the official media.

Rights lawyer Teng Biao also saw the proposed cut as an improvement, but said he believed that too many people were still wrongly sentenced to death, including several recent high-profile cases where supposedly dead victims turned up alive.

Teng also raised the case of Fan Qihang , a mafia boss in Chongqing municipality who is waiting for a Supreme People's Court review of his death sentence.

Fan claimed his confession was extracted by torture and his lawyer released secretly taped videos of the defendant last month showing his torture wounds. He was allegedly beaten, deprived of sleep, and on one occasion hung from iron bars with his hands shackled behind his back.

"According to the new evidence rules that came into effect on July 1, the Supreme People's Court should accept such evidence of torture, and order the case to be retried," Teng said.

More than 50 lawyers signed two open letters to the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Sunday calling for a re-examination of Fan's case.

The proposed amendments to the criminal code also include changes such as setting more specific rules for putting convicts on suspended death sentences on parole and making the death penalty inapplicable to anyone over 75 years old.

Capital crimes no more

Fraud

Involving use of fake receipts

Involving use of financial instruments

Involving use of letters of credit

Involving the use of VAT receipts to obtain export tax rebates or tax reduction

The forging and sale of VAT receipts

Smuggling

Of cultural relics

Of precious metals

Of precious animals, or products of precious animals

Of average cargoes and items

Theft

Of ancient sites and tombs

Of fossils of prehistoric human and vertebrate animals

The teaching of how to commit a crime

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**The Guardian, UK**

## **Understanding China's academic woes**

China's position as an economic superpower may be hampered by the patrimony and poor academic ethics of its universities

Steven Kuo

guardian.co.uk, Saturday 21 August 2010 13.00 BST

Chinese Graduates The Economist is among those to have said that Chinese academia is marked by fraud and poor academic ethics. Photograph: China Photos/Getty

"You just don't understand China!" This has become a daily exasperation as I debate with my Chinese colleagues on some aspects of their country. I arrived in Zhejiang four months ago as a visiting researcher on Chinese foreign policy, and my long-suffering colleagues have gone beyond the call of duty to help me come to terms with China's politics, society, worldview and how they themselves understand it.

China has just surpassed Japan as the second largest economic power in the world. It is also known for its work-obsessed students, who each year compete to earn a much sought-after place at university. As prestige is closely associated with education, you would imagine Chinese universities to be centres of excellence and critical scholarship. You would be wrong.

An article in the Economist has recently highlighted a fact that is well known in China, but less so in the western world. Chinese academia is marked by fraud and poor academic ethics, which may hamper the country's drive for an innovative economy and its continual rise to "great power" status. What in the west is considered serious misconduct (cheating at exams, fabricating research data, ghostwriting or plagiarism come to mind) are routine practices and

seldom punished. I wish I might tell you otherwise, given how warmly I am received here, but an independent, free and critical academia does not yet exist in China.

Chinese universities are modelled after civil services where most of those who are in charge are party members, not scholars. The chancellor of a top national university enjoys the equivalent ranking of a national government minister, and provincial universities' chancellors, provincial government ministers. Instead of being isolated ivory towers of academic research where quality research is the ultimate criterion for recognition, Chinese universities are places of hierarchy, patrimony, control and power struggles where personal networks outweigh academic ability.

In my experience, interviewing established professors is sometimes akin to having an audience with a ranking mandarin. They respond anecdotally from a position of superiority, confident with their privileged access to information, their influence on policy and their status in society. Attempts at engaging in academic debate are often dismissed with sighs of "you just don't understand China" and if pressed a little harder, accusations of western imperialism are almost inevitable.

Some of the younger generation of scholars complain privately of having to produce research on demand, of having to censor themselves on "sensitive topics" and having to deal with an unfair system that recognises seniority rather than originality and quality. But those who are unhappy with the system are in the minority; the majority of them are satisfied with their lot and are biding time until they too take up more senior positions.

The roots of the dismal state of higher learning in China today can be found in the cultural revolution. The current generation of professors began their careers just after a generation of intelligentsia, many of whom learned in both Chinese and western scholarship, were purged as counter-revolutionaries. The current generation have navigated their academic careers with the utmost care and diffidence, with little mentoring from previous generations and isolated from critical scholarly communities beyond China.

A recent comment by Premier Wen Jiabao that Chinese universities need to transform and be converted from a government civil service to centres of research was met with strong resistance from entrenched interests. Speaking as representatives of the National People's congress and as committee members of the Chinese people's political consultative committee, university chancellors argued that dissociating universities from government structures will lessen the value and effectiveness of Chinese education.

A strong and independent intelligentsia and academia reflects a stable and mature society – one that is secure enough to listen to criticism, reflect and reform. In its ideal form, the core of academia is freedom to debate. In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argued that no opinion ought to be censored as "... if the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and the livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error".

Presented with this ideal, my Chinese colleagues respond that this is a grand ideal but it cannot be done in China – I disagree. Perhaps I don't understand China after all.

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## **Overseas learners of Chinese top 40m**

**(Xinhua) Updated: 2010-08-19 20:14**

SHENYANG - Approximately 40 million students outside China are being taught Mandarin, said the director of an organization to promote Chinese culture and language on Thursday.

At present there are 300 Confucius Institutes in 94 countries and regions along with more than 300 Confucius Classrooms.

The symposium is being held in Shenyang, the capital city of China's Northeast Liaoning province, from Wednesday to Friday. The symposium is co-held by Hanban and The International Society for Chinese Language Teaching. More than 400 participants from 38 countries and regions are attending the conference.

Six famous Chinese teaching experts from north America, Europe, Africa, Chinese Mainland and Chinese Taiwan will give speeches on trends and developments of Chinese teaching.

Xu Jialu, president of The International Society for Chinese Language Teaching, said the symposium will enhance the work of international Chinese teaching.

The Confucius Institute is a non-profit institution aimed at expanding the teaching of the Chinese language and promoting Chinese arts, music and philosophy worldwide.

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## **New census of Chinese population to include Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan**

**Macauhub [ 2010-08-17 ]**

Beijing, China, 17 Aug – China, the world’s most populated country with 1.329 billion inhabitants, plans to carry out a new census as of November, including the residents of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan for the first time, the New China news agency reported Monday.

The agency cited the statistics bureau as saying that by 15 September around 100,000 surveyors would carry out the surveys, updating the residential information of each family.

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, population censuses were carried out in 1953, 1964, 1982, 1990 and 2000.

The last census established the Chinese population was 1.295 billion, but by the end of 2008 it was calculated at over 1.32 billion. (macauhub)

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

**Debates continue over bishop’s installation**

**Published Date: August 17, 2010**

**By [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter, Hong Kong**

The installation of Coadjutor Bishop Francis An Shuxin as the bishop of Baoding's 'open' Church community has continued to provoke intense debate.

Since his installation on Aug. 7, questions have been raised on Chinese Catholic websites over what the status of the former 'underground' coadjutor will be, with the concurrent presence of Bishop James Su Zhimin (alias Zhemin) of Baoding who is under detention.

Some have also questioned how the Holy See's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples advised Bishop An on the issue, if the Vatican knew the actions of the bishop well, as it had stated in a letter in 2008.

"How can unity in Baoding be possible if the Congregation remains silent on the issue?" asked one poster, while another one said, "it's time for the Holy See to rethink its policy, otherwise another farce will get on stage."

A canonist who preferred to remain anonymous told ucanews.com that an installation ceremony is not restricted to bishops only.

"Even a priest can have an installation when he is transferred to a new parish," he said. "So Bishop An's installation does not mean there is any change to his status, if he understands his own situation."

Meanwhile, some commentators on Church affairs in China predict that Bishop An could face more difficulties than other underground bishops who were installed in the open Church before him.

"The installation is a good thing for the government, but it's premature to say if it's good for the Church," said Kwun Ping-hung, a Hong Kong based observer. "The government hopes to manage the underground-dominated Baoding Church through Bishop An's leadership. But achieving reconciliation in the way Rome would like to see it will be difficult."

“Even the letter from Cardinal Bertone, the Vatican’s Secretary of State, to Bishop An last February only brought some of the underground priests back to his side. So there is still no unity,” Kwun said. “Since the case has become a concern among Catholics, the Holy See should make its position clear, in order to be accountable to Bishop Su, to the Boading Church and the China Church,” he added.

However, clergy from the ‘open’ community and other observers say that Bishop An made the right move by associating with the government.

“I believe the Vatican has compromised with the government on this case,” said Ren Yanli, a retired resaeacher based in Beijing. “This is what is needed for the ultimate good of the Church in China, though it will take time for Bishop An to change the underground community’s mentality.”

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**AsiaNews - [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it)**

**08/16/2010 15:27**

**CHINA**

## **Gansu Catholics remember Zhouqu victims on Assumption Day**

**by Annie Lam**

A national day of mourning is held to remember the victims of the 7 August mudslides. In churches, prayers and silence resound. In many places, the procession with the statue of Our Lady is cancelled. Lanzhou bishop speaks on the matter.

Lanzhou (AsiaNews) – Catholics in Gansu province joined others nationwide to observe a day of national mourning on 15 August for those who died in Zhouqu (Gansu), where a torrent of mud and floodwaters engulfed three villages on 7 August. The day also marked the Assumption of Mary, one of the four major Catholic festivities in China. Crowds of Catholics gathered in churches to celebrate the religious event and pray for the victims.

National flags flew at half-mast and many public events were cancelled as a show of respect. Representatives from government, medical teams, army and all sectors, each with a white flower, gathered in Zhouqu and Lanzhou squares to observe a three-minute moment of silence to mourn the dead. Many were moved to tears.

Zhouqu's death toll currently stands at 1,248 with 496 people still missing. Zhouqu County government announced plans to erect a monument with the inscribed names of all those who died from the mudslides.

Bishop Han Zihai of Lanzhou (Gansu) told AsiaNews that in churches Catholics also observed a three-minute moment of silence at 10 am, to remember the people in Zhouqu and elsewhere who suffered or were victims of the rains and floods.

Zhouqu, located between Lanzhou and Tianshui dioceses, is inhabited by some Tibetans but has no Catholics or churches, Bishop Han said. However, in areas in Longnan, which is near Zhouqu, there are some Catholic peasant families who were by heavy rains, he added.

On Assumption Day, Bishop Han said he blessed a new church in Jiayuguan, which can accommodate 200 faithful.

Diocesan administrator Father Zhao Jianzhang of Tianshui told AsiaNews that local Catholics prayed for the victims in Zhouqu, that they might overcome their hardships as soon as possible. He also noted that they prayed for peace in the country as well.

In his homily during the 15 August Mass, he reminded all the faithful to pray and donate for the needy.

Tianshui has about 20,000 Catholics, who are served by 13 priests.

In other parts of China, some parishes have cancelled processions in which Marian statues are carried out of respect for the national mourning.

Prayers and encouraging words for Zhouqu victims were posted on Catholic websites and in chat groups. As a sign of mourning for Zhouqu victims, some sites even switched to a black-and-white display.

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

## **Bishop Francis An Shuxin openly installed**

**Published Date: August 9, 2010**

**By [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter, Beijing**

Coadjutor Bishop Francis An Shuxin of Baoding, a former leading figure in northern China's "underground" Church community, has been installed as the ordinary of the "open" community at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Baoding city.

The installation Mass was led by Bishop An with retired Bishop John Liu Jinghe and Bishop Peter Fang Jianping, both of Tangshan, along with 24 priests from local and neighboring dioceses and a congregation of around 500 on Aug. 7.

The installation has caused greater division between the two Church communities.

"It is just a formality required by the government to recognize him. His own decision is most important. For me, he is my bishop, installed or not," an "open" priest said. But one of the 40 underground priests who chose not to attend the ceremony, said there is "no more space for reconciliation" for the time being.

"At a meeting in June, we reminded Bishop An to be loyal to the Church, his faith and the Pope's letter. It is he who has not followed the faith, not we who are refusing to reconcile," he said.

“We will see what Rome will say this time,” he said, noting that Bishop An is still the coadjutor for Rome unless Bishop James Su Zhimin (alias Zhemin), the ordinary of Baoding who has been detained since 1997, is asked to retire.

Bishop An has encountered controversy in the past. He was released from a 10-year detention in 2006 and allowed to work openly. He then took up a post in July 2009 at the Catholic Patriotic Association, an organization described in the Pope’s letter as “incompatible” with Catholic doctrines.

The Congregation of Evangelization for the Peoples issued a statement months later denying a media report that the Holy See pressed Bishop An to leave his “underground” status and register with the CPA.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican’s secretary of state, wrote to Bishop An in February to tell him that his decision to join the CPA “should have been avoided” and ask him not to abandon the possibility of acting in line with official Church protocol.

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**UCA News - [www.ucanews.com](http://www.ucanews.com)**

## **‘Matteo Ricci volunteers’ fan out across China**

**Published Date: August 6, 2010**

By [ucanews.com](http://ucanews.com) reporter, Shijiazhuang

Some young Catholics are heading out to work as “Matteo Ricci Volunteers” in various Church-run operations in China, including a leprosy convalescent home, orphanages, schools and HIV/AIDS treatment centers.

The 19 high school and university graduates will work on assignments lasting from six months to two years, starting in August.

The program is organized by Jinde Charities, a Catholic NGO based in Shijiazhuang, Hebei.

It is named in honor of Father Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit missionary and pioneer of the Catholic Church in China, to mark the 400th anniversary of his death.

“Today’s young people rarely get the chance to serve others,” said program coordinator Hu Limin. “We hope that being ‘Matteo Ricci Volunteers’ will help them to grow in maturity.”

The group received nine days of training on topics such as how to serve people with HIV/AIDS and leprosy as well as interpersonal relationships and psychology.

“Jinde also pays for insurance and transport for all the volunteers and we give them some pocket money so they can focus on their service,” said Hu.

“I’m hoping this will train me to handle challenges,” said 22-year-old volunteer Mary Liu. “I want to do something worthwhile while I’m young and make a contribution to the Church.”

The medical graduate will go to Guangxi on Aug. 15 and stay there for a year, working with HIV/AIDS infected children. “I admit I’m afraid,” she said.

“My desire is to seek a new understanding on life,” said another volunteer, 24-year-old Yang Shuai. “I want to develop my faith and personality through this. Meeting friends who cherish the same ideals has already strengthened my confidence and courage.”

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